

July 2026 Newsletter



Welcome to the July 2026 newsletter for BRIDGES for Dementia Network+, where we focus on moving technology beyond simple monitoring to truly empower independent living. In this issue, find more details on our upcoming Annual Conference, the full report from our first Innovation Workshop on Indoor and Outdoor Spaces, and highlights from our recent Dementia Design Lab event.

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Save the date for our Annual Conference



Date: September 14th 2026

Time: 9:30am – 4:30pm

Location: Mercure Sheffield St. Paul's Hotel and Spa, 119 Norfolk St, Sheffield City Centre, Sheffield S1 2JE

To register please purchase a free ticket here.

The Morning Agenda

09:00 - 09:45 | Registration

09:45 | Welcome and introduction — *Dr. Jennifer MacRitchie, BRIDGES N+ Director*

10:00 | Sheffield City Council Strategy on Dementia: Our Next Steps — *Jo Pass (Assistant Director, Living and Ageing Well)*

10:30 | How can businesses take into account people with dementia when designing products and services? — *Gordon McCullough, CEO Research Institute for Disabled Consumers*

10:50 | Break and networking opportunity

11:10 | Panel discussion: The promise and pitfalls of technology and dementia

11:55 | Co-design in practice: How people with lived experience may influence the design of new technology — *Roger Whitham & Joseph Lindley, University of Lancaster*

12:15 | Technology presentations by attending companies

12:30 | Lunch and opportunity to view the exhibition

The Afternoon Agenda

We are running three parallel sessions from 13:30 – 15:00. Attendees are welcome to select one of the three to take part in. Email us at bridgesfordementia@sheffield.ac.uk to secure your place.



Technical presentations by the wider research community - A series of talks will present the most recent research on different areas of technology and how they might impact the lives of people living with dementia.

Experiential workshop on communication - Hosted by Grace Stead, this workshop will help attendees experience how dementia impacts communication. Participants will learn how to communicate more effectively with people living with dementia, how to make technological solutions more inclusive and how to best include people with dementia in activities. *Places are limited to 20 participants.*

Grace Stead



Enrichment for the Elderly

Rachael Litherland



Innovations in Dementia

Early Career Researcher (ECR) masterclass - In this workshop chaired by Rachael Litherland from Innovations in Dementia, ECRs are invited to present their research ideas to a panel composed of people with lived experience of dementia. The panel will provide feedback on your idea from the perspective of people affected by dementia.

Our First Ideas & Innovation Workshop on Indoor and Outdoor Spaces: The Report



Summer Feasibility Funds Now Open

To turn these insights into reality, BRIDGES Network+ is offering funding for early-stage, high-quality small projects focused on Indoor & Outdoor Spaces.

Requirement: Projects must meaningfully involve people with lived experience of dementia (including carers) from initial design through to final delivery.

👉 Read the full report and apply on the [Funding Opportunities page](#).

On May 28, 2026, the BRIDGES Network+ hosted its first Ideas & Innovation Event at UCL, uniting researchers, innovators, and people with lived experience to discuss dementia-inclusive environmental design.

Key Report Findings

The workshop culminated in a comprehensive report advocating for a shift from passive monitoring to active empowerment across six core environmental themes:

Indoor Comfort: Managing air quality, lighting, and temperature to reduce distress.

Smart Navigation: Using digital tools, sensory support, and robotics to ease navigation in complex public spaces.

Confident Outdoor Living: Designing budget-friendly streets, parks, and housing to support independence and social connection.

Cross-Cutting Issues: Addressing data privacy, the value of co-design, and avoiding a UK care "postcode lottery."

You can read the full report [here](#).

Dementia Design Lab

Designing the Future of Dementia Tech - With the Real Experts



On June 22nd & 23rd, the BRIDGES for Dementia Network+ hosted the Dementia Design Lab in Manchester. The aim was to explore how new technologies can genuinely support people living with dementia and their carers, putting people with lived experience right at the center of the design process. Participants joined focused discussions across four core areas:

- Getting around
- Digital technology development
- Communications & staying in touch
- Art, sports & the things we love

After sharing their daily challenges, participants' insights were fed into an AI tool to generate visual concepts of potential assistive technologies. The groups then critiqued these AI designs, offering grounded, invaluable feedback on what would actually work in real life, and what wouldn't. The event proved that truly impactful innovation must be built with people, not just for them. The insights gathered will directly shape the future of BRIDGES Network+ research.

Partner Highlights

New Insights on Working with Dementia

In June 2026, the Working With Dementia Network Plus Research Team hosted an insightful webinar exploring the intersection of employment and dementia. Drawing on emerging evidence from three distinct research initiatives, the session shed light on how to better support employees, family carers, and employers navigating this diagnosis.



The webinar featured key findings from several academic institutions:

University of the West of Scotland: Dr. Rachel Allen discussed strategies for enhancing workplace experiences, focusing on the three pillars of employee wellbeing, workplace inclusivity, and economic impacts.

Lancaster University: Dr. Kiera Kenny presented rapid evidence reviews concerning workplace support, brain health, and the barriers faced by informal carers in the labor market.

Northumbria University: Dr. Connor McDonald shared an analysis of employment tribunal judgments across the UK, Canada, and Australia, outlining how current employment laws operate in practice and where legal reforms are needed.

Advisory Panel members Claire and Rynagh shared powerful firsthand accounts of their lived experiences balancing work with caring responsibilities.

Get in Touch



<https://uk.linkedin.com/company/bridges-network-plus>



<https://bridgesfordementia.org>



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BRIDGES for Dementia Network+ is dedicated to developing technologies that empower people living with dementia to lead full and independent lives. Led by the University of Sheffield, our interdisciplinary network brings together researchers, community partners, and people with lived experience to ensure new tools are trustworthy, inclusive, and effective.

Our Core Research Themes

Indoor and Outdoor Spaces: Enhancing navigation in homes and public areas.

Arts, Sports, and Culture: Using creative technologies to support wellbeing and identity.

Communication: Building AI and digital tools to keep people connected.

Technology Translation: Ensuring innovations are affordable and ethically designed.

Our Commitment to Lived Experience

We co-design everything with people living with dementia and their carers. By partnering with diverse communities, we ensure lived experience shapes a national research agenda that reflects the community's true needs.

BRIDGES for Dementia Network+ is funded by UKRI (EPSRC), Alzheimer's Society, and the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR).